

America strong and free internationally and domestically and while not turning our backs on those who need the most help.

Mr. Speaker, I commend the Bush administration for a job well done.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GERLACH). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 2003, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

NATIONAL SECURITY THREAT, FRAUD AND ABUSE ASSOCIATED WITH VISA LOTTERY PROGRAM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. GOODLATTE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to discuss a government program that presents a serious national security threat and is wrought with fraud and abuse, the visa lottery program.

Under the program, each successful applicant is chosen at random and given the status of permanent resident, a green card holder, based on pure luck. A perfect example of the system gone awry is the case of Hesham Mohamed Ali Hedayet, the Egyptian national who killed two and wounded three during a shooting spree at the Los Angeles International Airport in July of 2002. He was allowed to apply for lawful permanent resident status in 1997 because of his wife's status as a visa lottery winner.

The State Department's Inspector General has even weighed in on the national security threat posed by the visa lottery program. In a report issued in September of 2003, the Office of Inspector General stated that the visa lottery program contains "significant threats to national security from entry of hostile intelligence officers, criminals, and terrorists into the United States as permanent residents."

Usually immigrant visas are issued to foreign nationals who have existing connections with family members lawfully residing in the United States. These types of relationships help ensure that immigrants entering our country have a stake in continuing America's success and have needed skills to contribute to our Nation's economy. However, under the visa lottery program, visas are awarded to immigrants at random without meeting such criteria.

In addition, the visa lottery program is unfair to immigrants who comply with the United States' immigration laws. The visa lottery program does not expressly prohibit illegal aliens from applying to receive visas through the program. Thus the program treats foreign nationals that comply with our laws the same as those that blatantly violate our laws. In addition, most family-sponsored immigrants currently

face a wait of years to obtain visas. Yet the lottery program pushes 50,000 random immigrants with no particular family ties, job skills, or education ahead of these families and employer-sponsored immigrants each year with relatively no wait. This sends the wrong message to those who wish to enter our great country and to the international community as a whole.

Furthermore, the visa lottery program is wrought with fraud. A recent report released by the Center for Immigration Studies states that it is commonplace for foreign nationals to apply for the lottery program multiple times using many different aliases. In addition, the visa lottery program has spawned a cottage industry featuring sponsors in the U.S. who falsely promise success to applicants in exchange for large sums of money. Ill-informed foreign nationals are willing to pay top dollar for the "guarantee" of lawful permanent resident status in the U.S.

The State Department's Office of Inspector General confirms these allegations of widespread fraud in its September report. Specifically, the report states that the visa lottery program is "subject to widespread abuse" and that "identity fraud is endemic and fraudulent documents are commonplace." Furthermore, the report also reveals that the State Department found that 364,000 duplicate applications were detected in 2003 alone. The only penalty for such abuse is disqualification from that year's lottery.

The visa lottery program represents what is wrong with our country's immigration system. The serious national security threats, fraud and waste that the visa lottery program present beg the question why is this program still in existence?

Last February I introduced H.R. 775, the Security and Fairness Enhancement, or SAFE, for America Act.

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This important legislation would eliminate the controversial visa lottery program. Not only will the removal of the visa lottery improve our Nation's security but it will also make the administration of our immigration laws more consistent and fair and help reduce immigration fraud and opportunism.

I urge each of my colleagues to support this important legislation.

INDEPENDENCE AIRLINES/O'HARE DELAYS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GERLACH). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. LIPINSKI) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. LIPINSKI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my great concern that schedules recently implemented by the new carrier Independence Air will undermine the hard work that the FAA has done for this summer's service to O'Hare International Airport. This is

an issue where we should all be concerned, considering that delays at O'Hare not only impact my district but also shake the entire national aviation system.

Beginning this past winter and continuing through spring, the DOT and the FAA worked carefully with the two largest carriers at O'Hare, American Airlines and United Airlines, to reduce schedules during the peak hours for this summer season. Those airlines agreed to reduce their schedules in the busy afternoon and evening hours, first by 5 percent and later by another 2.5 percent. This notable effort was widely announced by the DOT and the airlines as an important step in reducing delays at O'Hare and throughout the entire national airspace system during this peak season.

However, Independence Air, a new airline operating small 50-seat regional jets, has announced they will have 12 new round trips per day from Washington Dulles to O'Hare. This service has at least five round trips in the peak hours and began last week on June 16.

Mr. Speaker, this offering of new service, especially with small regional jets, is not only unfair to those airlines who made the schedule cuts but also undermines the work of the Department of Transportation and adds delays during the busy summer months. The new service adds only 600 seats per day in each direction, but uses 12 round trips' worth of takeoff and landing capacity.

Furthermore, the Chicago-Washington market already has plenty of service, including 10 round trips with full-sized low-fair jets by Southwest between BWI and Midway, ATA Airlines between Reagan National and Midway, and even more service by American and United Airlines from Reagan National to O'Hare. Meanwhile, American and United have had to reduce service in smaller, less-served markets to free up capacity at O'Hare.

The bottom line is that operational restrictions at O'Hare will not solve the delay problem over the long run. The answer to the delay problem is increasing capacity through the O'Hare Modernization Program, OMP. Therefore, I do hope that the completion of the OMP's environmental impact statement, the ESI, will move forward as expeditiously as possible.

In the meantime, I am concerned about Independence Air, because the Department's future ability to work with existing carriers to reduce schedules will be ruined if a schedule agreement can be so quickly and easily undermined.

I hope that this is an issue that we can study more in depth at an aviation subcommittee hearing in the coming months. I ask that the DOT work quickly with Independence Air to shift these planned flights out of the peak periods at O'Hare this summer.

I would also appreciate an explanation as to how future scheduling agreements can be enforced. Without